THE

Hindu Message

A Weekly Review of Indian and World=Problems from the Hindu Standpoint

Medical Supplement

'चिकित्सितात्पुण्यतमं न किञ्चिदपि शुश्रुमः'। 'बिभेत्यल्पश्रुताद्वेदो मामयं प्रहरिष्यति'

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Committee on the Indigenous System of Medicines which sat in the Committee room in the Legislative Council from 25th to 30th September under the presidency of Khan Bahadur Mahomed Usman, M. L. A. examined about forty witnesses who pointed that indigenous systems were based on perfectly scientific principles, there was great necessity for establishing a net-work of Medical Schools and Colleges and also Hospitals and Dispensaries of indigenous medicines in the presidency, that institutions of indigenous systems are much more economical than allopathic ones and more efficient in all departments except surgery and Medical registration of indigenous practitioners was necessary.

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It is expected that the Committee will submit their reports to the Government by December so that the subject may be brought before the next Budget-meeting of the Legislative Council. As we cannot predict now at this stage what shape their recommendations will assume we shall wait and see what impression their reports has upon the Government and whether any tangible result is forthcoming.

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Dr. Cecil Webb-Johnson in an interesting article to the *Times* gives the following rules as essential for good health:—(1) Rise from a meal feeling that you could eat a little more; (2) Never eat merely from a sense of duty, or to please some one else; (3) Never eat unless you have a good appetite; (4) Do not eat if feeling ill; wait for the return of a healthy appetite. Nature will remind you when you require more food. (5) Vary the amount of food you eat each day according to what you have 'earned.' A hard day's work will entitle you to more food than a day of comparative idleness; (6) If you feel or know that you have overeaten at one meal, either miss the next altogether or lessen the amount of food you take at subsequent meals; (7) Never let a day pass without eating some natural food in the form of fresh fruits, green vegetables; 8 Never drink milk. It is unnatural food save for the young; (9) Never eat between meals: (10) Don't 'bolt' your food. Eat slowly and masticate thoroughly all you eat."

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Discussing vitamines Dr. Drummond states that recent discoveries establish that greenstuffs contain great quantities of vitamines, and milk is only valuable in proportion to the amount of greenstuff eaten by cattle. He highly eulogises oil, and describes as the epitome of condensed vitamines the fish that feed on the green leafed plants abounding the Norwegian coasts

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The experiments reported on by Givens and his associates demonstrate that the raw apple and the raw banana are antiscorbutic agents. However, if either of these foods is subjected to any considerable temperature treatment, such as ordinarily employed in preservation by desiccation or canning, the amount of antiscorbutie vitamin in the original raw material is markedly reduced.

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Drs. Vaslio and Roth describe the case of a man aged 29, who suffered for two 2 years from abdominal pain. After a meal, violent pain came on Operation revealed stenosis of the ileum near the caecum. Resection was done and he died soon afterwards. The necropsy showed tuberculosis of the small intestine localised mainly to diverticuli and secondary to pulmonary tuberculosis, The tuberculous deverticulitis caused stenosis, followed by necrosis, perforation and peritonitis.

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Dr. Gokal Chand H. M. D. has had encouraging results in guineaworm infection by adopting a plan of injecting rectified spirit into the worm. The method adopted is to to inject rectified spirit into the prsenting part of the worm, exert gentle traction, again inject spirit and again traction until the entire worm is delivered Should the worm be broken in the process, a further injection is given and the worm left to be got rid of by natural means.

Propagation and Birth Control.

Till a few years back, propagation was unrestricted. Even now there is no law in any country save Germany (where it has been only recently enacted) to limit the size of one's family, be he a syphilitic, a criminal by instinct, a penniless pauper and unable to provide. The teaching of contraception or its practice was considered to be a moral and legal crime. The sociologist who warned that the world was overpopulated was laughed at. The scientist who said that disease was often inherited was ridiculed and the idea of a person being his brother's keeper was accepted only as an empty platitude. Even the doctors, for fear of heavy penalties, allowed the matter to drift down. In short, the apostles of limitation have had a hard and unprofitable time.

The result of all this has been that the world is flooded with weak, imbecile and mentally deficient children and numerous venereal diseases have appeared to confront the medical profession with serious difficulties. Hundreds of mental hospitals and asylums requiring large sums of money for their running and maintenance have had to be opened.

But time brings a change, and now we receive these things soberly; people are realizing the necessity of regulating child birth. There is an awakening all over the world and most people have realised to learn the truth that it is not only useless but harmful both to themselves and to the State, to people the earth with their defective progeny, to perpetuate their tainted stock, and to impose on society more criminals or neurotics.

Recently, a movement has been set up in England to preach the doctrine of birth control. A monthly paper is issued from London entitled, "Birth Control News. Its object is to diffuse constructive, true, scientific and sympathetically helpful sex knowledge among the people. A society has also been formed for constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress, with its offices at 61, Marlborough Road, London and Dr. Mary Stopes as President. A qualified nurse there, gives sound and wholesome methods of birth control to all unemployed married persons. The objects of the society are (1) to bring home to all, the fundamental nature of the reforms involved in conscious and constructive control of conception and the illumination of sex life as a basis of racial progress; (2) to consider the individual, national, international, racial, political, economic, scientific, spiritual and other aspects of the theme, and (3) to supply who need it with the full knowledge of sound physiological methods of control.

A discussion was opened by one Dr. Mary Scharlieb, C.B.E., M.D. who has been practising there since the last forty years. She opposed birth control by the use of contraceptives on medical and moral grounds. This was followed by a lively discussion and several letters, both from men in favour and against birth control by contraceptives, appeared in the "British Medical Journal."

That birth control is a necessity of the day is admitted by almost all sane persons. It is very desirable from the economic point of view also, and to restrict families to the dimensions of their incomes is better and happier. It is a pleasure indeed to have two or three children whom one can bring up well fed and well educated, than to have unlimited number, which means constant deprivation.

But the question is what are the best means of achieving this object. There are diverse opinions on this point. One writer suggests the elimination of undesirables. But this procedure would be impossible in the strict sense of the remark, for it is extremely difficult to solve the question who is and who is not an undesirable citizen. The basis of this theory seems to be that parents of low mentality have generally large families but this is not always true. There are large families among parents of high mental faculties as well as among the low. Another writer suggests that the number of children, a family might have, should be fixed definitely. But this is good only if one could enforce that limit. The use of contraceptives will have to be resorted to in this suggestion also. A third writer suggests that the sanest method by which we can limit an excessive birth rate is, to raise the age when men and women are supposed to arrive at maturity and with it, the minimum age when parties can marry. Careful study has no doubt shown that children born of parents of mature mental and physical development are brighter and stronger than those born to parents of immature age. Even in nature, the writer says, we see the same principle apply to plants and animals. When sowing the seed, the gardener selects only the strongest plants for planting. The stockman selects stock of mature development for breeding purposes. as by so doing he is assured of getting strong offspring. He does not breed the young animals because he knows the result. The same principle, in the opinion of the writer, should apply to humanity. By postponing procreation, the body cells could fully develop before they are called upon to reproduce themselves, and they would thus require a strong, healthy growth which would be transmitted to the offspring. In short, there are various suggestions but all those can be ruled out of order or found to be lacking in one point or another. For the present, at least we consider it worth while to warn the advocates of contraceptives for controlling birth and regulating families that the use of such methods is not desirable from the medical as well as moral and social points of view. Such practice strikes at the very root of womanhood, and is therefore insulting to the noble unity of man and woman, brought about by sacred marriage tie, which is a source of our happiness and civilization. It is a great and shameful crime of the worst type. The policy of the British Medical Association that the public display and advertisement of contraceptives, should be prohibited by law, has our full support and agreement.

In our opinion, the only safe and legitimate means of controlling birth and regulating families is by practising 'self control.' That the habit of self control and abstinence is the great bulwark against passion and that it is the prophylactic against venereal diseases, are facts well borne out by the testimony of various distinguished writers and authoritative persons. Those who believe that continence is impossible are wrong. To people of India at least, who are more inclined towards religion, this argument appears to be ridiculous and absurd on the very face of it. That continence is possible, is proved by cases of thousands of *sanyasis* and clergymen. The habit of self control, rather, maintains the purity of our respect to elders and enables us to perform our duty to the community and to our women, in a most intelligent and wise manner.

—*Practical Medicine.*

Operation For Renal Calculus.

A rapid operation which entails but slight trauma and avoids urinary leakage is, according to Howard Kelly performed as follows: ' An incision having been made through the posterior triangle, the tissues are pulled widely open with both hands, permitting the insertion of four or five fingers. After breaking through Gerota's capsule, by simply traction with forceps on the perirenal fat, it is often possible to draw the entire kidney out on to the surface. When, however, the position of the stone is exactly known,

he operates upon the kidney in situ, making a direct opening into its lower pole or tilting down the upper pole so as to bring it within easy reach for extraction of the calculus. The kidney is gently palpated between thumb and fingers to see whether the stone can be located. If it is found, it can then be thrust up toward the dorsum with the fingers to facilitate its removal; if not, a fine needle fastened in a cork is thrust into the kidney where it is expected the stone will be found. If the needle touches the stone it is left in situ while a small incision (averaging 2 cm.) is made through the renal capsule. A spatulate instrument, neither blunt nor sharp, is driven through the renal substance down to the stone. A narrow pair of forceps is then inserted and the stone caught and extracted. If the removal is clean and clear and there is only a mild infection, the wound is closed entirely with one or two mattress sutures; as the bleeding is usually minimal, a single catgut mattress suture may suffice. The external wound is then closed with a small drain. Sometimes it is an advantage, if the stone is a little large, to carry the scissors into the pelvis till the stone is touched, and on withdrawing to open them a little, thus enlarging the opening in a blunt way. This method is splendidly adapted to a stone which is out in one of the calices, and not far distant from the cortex. Kelly has removed in this way, with almost no damage at all, a stone from the upper and lower poles of the same kidney, first tilting up one end and then the other."—*Medical Herald.*

Treatment of Sterility by Organic Extracts.

Dr. Bercovitch has obtained results by the use of organic extracts in 24 cases of sterility, some of which he describes in detail. He says that, in order to gain any benefit from the use of organic extracts, it is necessary that the case should be one in which the sterility is due to some disorder of the endocrine glands. It is further necessary, that there should be definite knowledge, as to which of these glands, is at fault, and also that it would be definitely ascertained whether the glands involved are secreting too much or too little. It is further requisite that the inter-relation of these glands and the correlation of their several actions should be appreciated. It must be borne in mind that probably the whole of the ductless gland system is related to the genital functions. Further sterility may be due to several factors which are entirely beyond the control of these ductless glands. Formerly it was the custom to treat every case of sterility by dilatation or curettage. To treat every case of sterility now by administration of the glands of internal secretion is just as irrational and just as unscientific. If one is convinced that these endocrine glands (one or more) are at fault and if one can say which of them are involved and further give a reason for his belief that the administration of certain extracts should be of service, then one is justified in prescribing these products. The various endocrine glands do not act by themselves individually but by a close functional correlation through which if one gland is affected the others react very quickly in the endeavour to compensate the disturbance induced in the organism by the former. Therefore the reproductive functions are dependent not only upon the ovaries but also upon the normal action and co-operation of the thyroid and dituitary (especially anterior lobe.) It is only by the most careful and searching analysis of the signs and symptoms, presented that the gland primarily at fault can be determined. Endocrine abnormalities may develop:—(1) After any of the diseases of childhood. (2) In consequence of severe chilling. (3) Chronic debilitating diseases (4) Prolonged puerperium. (5) Prolonged lactation (6) Chronic cardiac lesions (7) Pregnancy. (8) Morphine and lead poisoning. (9) Overwork and underfeeding. (10) Too much strain and monotony and too much depression. Pituitary type of sterility is divided into those in which the huypopi tuitarism developed in childhood, the symptoms becoming apparent only at or following puberty and those in which the pituitary disturbance occurred after puberty. Of thyroid dysfunction the one that interests us most in relation to sterility is that of thyroid insufficiency. The ovarian type is quite characteristic.—*Indian Journal of Medicne.*

Drugs and Diet.

It is admitted on all hands that most of the drugs do not and can not *cure* disease; at the most, they can relieve some distressing symptoms; but it must be understood that the drug relieves the symptom only giving rise to another new thus almost always complicating the case and jeopardizing the final result and hope of complete cure.

For instance, in distressing cough, a very usual symptom of bronchitis, the cough is merely a symptom of the catarrhal inflammation of the trachea and bronchial tubes. The mucous deposited on the sensitive mucous membrane starts up a nervous reflex, occasioning a spasmodic expulsive effort to dislodge the irritating accumulation; that is the object of the cough. The cough is nature's method of removing the waste-accumulation. There are thousand and one drugs, unhesitatingly prescribed by the physicians, any one of which is enough to paralyze the nerves so as to stop cough abruptly altogether. But to stop the cough means that the mucous deposit is allowed to accumulate and thus the actual condition becomes worse than before. The only scientific treatment is to so increase the general and local excretory process, as to prevent any further deposit of mucous. The cough then stops naturally only because there remains nothing to cough for.

One of the most important measures that can be best tried upon in the way of curing a patient is—*Dietary Regulation.* Almost all diseases take their origin in the stomach and alimentary canal; and the primary and principal, though not the *only* cause, of intestinal trouble, is dietetic error.

In prescribing a diet, one should remember that "*each person is a law unto himself.*" What he shall eat depends upon many things—his temperament, his size and weight, the kind and amount of work he is wont to do, the climate in which he lives and the season of the year (more food is required in winter than in summer), and upon several other things.

—*Health and Happiness*

The *Malabar Herald* writes:—

All have read of carnivorous plants, of laughing plants, and of plants that weep, but who has heard of a plant that coughs? There is the authority of a French botanist, however, for the statement that a plant in various tropical regions actually possesses the power to cough in the most approved matter. The fruit of this plant resemble the common bread bean. It appears that the coughing plant is something of a crank, that it has a curious horror of all dust. As soon as a few grains of dust are deposited on its leaves, the air chambers that cover their faces and are the respiratory organs of the plants, become filled with gas, swell, and by driving out the gas, with a slight explosion and a sound that resembles as much the cough of a child suffering from a cold as to carry a most uncanny sensation to the one beholding the phenomenon.

Dr. K. C. Dube, Captain I. M. S. (U. P.) writing on the distinguishing marks of bites of poisonous snakes says:—In India there are numerous varieties of snakes but only thirty-seven of these are poisonous and only seven are commonly met with. Everyone should learn to distinguish the different varieties, for it often happens that a man faints solely from fear even if the snake biting him is non-poisonous. There is a distinction between the wounds inflicted by poisonous and non-poisonous snakes. If on looking at a wound closely you find marks of two teeth you should conclude that the snake was poisonous, but if the wound shows cross marks of several teeth, the snake must be non-poisonous. The wound inflicted by a poisonous snake is characteristic. Soon after the bite there is intense burning pain, the wound begins to turn red and bleed and the whole part becomes blue and swollen. The man feels as if intoxicated and sleepy. There is a peculiar sensation in the legs and sometimes he begins to vomit. The power of speech and swallowing is lost and respiration is gradually stopped. Persons bitten by certain varieties of snakes at once become senseless, their body becomes cold, there is copious perspiration, the pulse becomes feeble and often there is bleeding through the mouth and bowels.

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